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NEWS RELEASE

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Valles Caldera National Preserve Chosen for National Design Competition

One of Only Seven Selectees

Jemez Springs, NM— A nationwide competition focused on “breathing new life into America’s most spectacular public places” selected the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) as the site best suited to represent the Inter-Mountain Region. The Van Alen Institute is launching the *Parks for the People: A Student Competition Reimagining America’s National Parks* in collaboration with the National Park Service, the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. *Parks for the People* is a culminating project of *Designing the Parks*—a public-private partnership to promote well-designed public parks in America.

The competition pairs student and faculty teams with park administrators to design model solutions which can be developed as paradigms that can strengthen sites across the National Park System and the VCNP. The first stage of the competition begins this fall when faculty in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, planning, ecology, preservation, communications, and related fields organize research teams and begin an investigation into one of seven sites around the nation as the focus of their studio proposal. The VCNP represents the Inter-Mountain Region.

The other six sites are:

Northeast Region: Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Elverson, PA

National Capital Region: Civil War Defenses of Washington, Washington, DC

Southeast Region: Biscayne National Park, Miami, FL

Southeast Region: Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Atlanta, GA

Midwest Region: Nicodemus National Historic Site, Nicodemus, KS

Pacific West Region: San Juan Island National Historical Park, Friday Harbor, WA

After stage one, teams will submit proposals for a studio class based on each of the respective sites they studied. One proposal will be selected from each of the seven regions and will participate in a spring semester design studio for the final stage of the competition.

The competition and selection come at an ideal time for the VCNP because the Valles Caldera Trust is currently considering several alternatives for visitor facility development and public access to the Preserve.

“The Trust is very excited to have students and faculty apply the latest innovations in sustainability and design to the Preserve,” said Marie Rodriguez, Natural Resource Coordinator of the Valles Caldera Trust. “It will be interesting to see how the proposals utilize the information from our Public Access and Use Planning effort and which will be further developed during the design studio stage. It will be useful information.”

Similar to Valles Caldera Trust’s Public Access and Use Planning process, open, transparent decision-making and the engagement of all parties are among the key concepts and principles (<http://www.designingtheparks.org/principles>) of Designing the Parks and the public should anticipate an opportunity to collaborate in the process.

The progress of the competition can be followed by visiting the Van Alen Institute website www.vanalen.org or the Designing the Parks website at www.designingtheparks.org.

The Valles Caldera Trust oversees the Valles Caldera National Preserve, formerly the privately owned “Baca Ranch.” The property is located in the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. It was purchased by the federal government in 2000 under the Valles Caldera National Preservation Act. The property is known for its huge meadows, abundant wildlife, meandering streams and remarkable scenery. More information about the Preserve can be found at www.vallescaldera.gov.

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